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ABSTRACT

The report summarizes findings of 6 weeks spent in the Netherlands and Denmark to study services provided to learning disabled (LD) young adults and adults. The school to work transition for LD students is examined along with the LD adult in society, and comparisons are made between Dutch and Danish approaches. The Dutch system, highly structured and restrictive, is seen to be in transition with increasing emphasis placed on integration. Social pressures such as high unemployment intensify school to work problems, but flexibility is provided in secondary school training. LD adults are absorbed by societal systems with little consideration for school-related problems. Transition programs in Denmark are described as well integrated and highly flexible. Danish Folk High Schools which deemphasize scholastic-specific study are seen as examples of educational diversity. The role of the kurator in the transition process is described, as are the sequences in the Danish vocational education and training programs. Ways in which the Danish system accommodates LD adults and promotes full integration are noted. Implications for U.S. practices are briefly considered. (CL)

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FINAL REPORT

A STUDY OF THE SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITION FOR LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS AND THE LEARNING DISABLED ADULT IN SOCIETY IN THE NETHERLANDS AND DENMARK

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ABSTRACT

As learning disabled persons have come of age, there are important questions that need answers and issues to be addressed regarding life adjustment. The transition of school to work and the state of the art of services to learning disabled adults are two topics that are central to adjustment throughout the lifespan. This was the focus of a study-visit to the Netherlands and Denmark sponsored by the World Rehabilitation Fund. This report summarizes the findings of six weeks spent in European countries whose educational and social welfare systems are amongst the most sophisticated in the world. In addition, they are two countries who have a reputation of providing quality educational services to learning disabled persons.

The findings provide a contrast between the Dutch and Danish systems. The Dutch system is highly structured and restrictive but in transition while the Danish system is well integrated and highly flexible in all systems that serve learning disabled individuals. Included in the report are innovative ideas and practices for providing transition for learning disabled persons and supporting them in their life adjustment efforts.

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Part 1

The School to Work Transition for Learning Disabled Students and the Learning Disabled Adult in Dutch Society

Factors Affecting the Investigation in the Netherlands

The population of school-age children and youth who are synonymous with the learning disabled population in the United States is the learning and behavior problem category. The Dutch refer to this group as leer-en opvoedingsmoeilijkheden or LOM students. There are no specific rules and regulations to describe this handicapping condition. Diagnostic determination is made through a collective decision-making process of school building level personnel and ancillary personnel which includes psychologists, social workers, and physicians. In a general sense, intelligence quotient for LOM students is greater than 80.

The system of education in the Netherlands is organized so that responsibility lies in three spheres of jurisdiction: Protestant schools, Catholic schools, and non-sectarian or public schools. All of these schools receive monies through a system of block grants. This enables respective school authorities to determine their own priorities. It ensures flexibility, accountability, and responsiveness in practices and procedures, and creates a system of competition that fosters quality education. This largely decentralized system enables a large degree of local autonomy with seemingly minimal interference from national education officials.

The entire system of special education in the Netherlands is being reconceptualized in order to promote maximum integration of handicapped students into regular education programs. Currently, the Dutch educational system is highly structured and special educational services reflect that

organizational pattern. Generally, there are self-contained segregated classes for handicapped students from kindergarten through secondary school. There is an insignificant percentage of handicapped students who attend regular programs. Of this number LOM students are the largest group who are educated in regular classes.

As a result of this reconceptualization, special education in the Netherlands will be in transition beginning 1985 when educational services to handicapped students will be integrated in the regular education system. Regular education programs will be infused with handicapped students either programmatically or through physical proximity. The large percentage of the students who will be programmatically integrated are LOM students. This will take pressure off of growing special education budgets. While student population in the Netherlands has markedly decreased, the population of LOM students has increased dramatically in past years.

The Netherlands is currently undergoing a severe financial crisis. The budget is being financed by deficit spending and as a result budgets at all governmental levels are shrinking. This has put the systems that ensure a high quality of life at risk. Discussion and debate have ensued at the highest levels of the Dutch government which question the extent to which the Netherlands can maintain their current level of operation in educational and social welfare systems. There are proposals abound which speak to retrenchment and ultimately tightening the "social safety net" of their system.

Tied into the economic problems in the Netherlands is a high unemployment rate. In a country of 14 million (and fewer in the work force) unemployment is 15 per cent or 800,000-1,000,000. This has greatly affected the youth of the country. Upon completion of education there are relatively few entry level jobs. This lack of jobs has increased pressure on the educational system

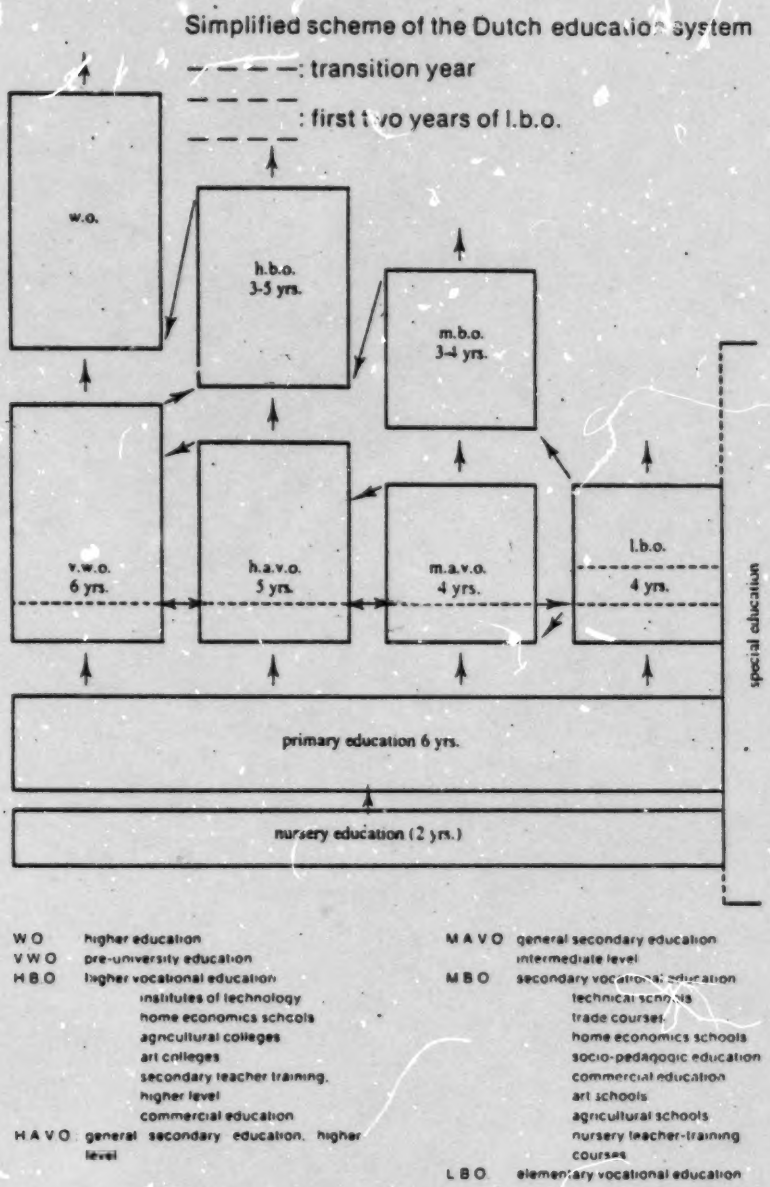
because students are continuing their studies rather than facing unemployment and "nothing to do". Sadly, this has intensified the problems of the transition from school to work for learning disabled persons. Their handicap makes them less competitive amongst a top heavy unemployment market.

The Transition from School to Work

The overwhelming majority of LOM students in the Dutch educational system attend a self-contained class in a segregated school during the primary education years. At the age of 14 years old, the transition of school-to-work begins with movement into the secondary school system. Upon leaving the primary system, students take an exit examination which has great impact on placement in secondary schools. The ultimate decision of placement is controlled by an in-house placement committee which matches estimated future educational progress with one of the many options of education and training at the secondary level.

Figure 1 shows the choices of secondary level education. These are university education, general secondary education (high level), general secondary education (intermediate level), and secondary vocational education (lower level). Currently, within this structure 70 per cent of LOM students attend secondary vocational education (lower level), 20 per cent receive instruction in general secondary education (intermediate level), and about 10 per cent participate in general secondary education (higher level). The system and decision making is geared to this dispersion of LOM students because they are thought to have greater chances of success in less theoretical secondary education. In each case, however, one of the primary program goals is to educate LOM students in a way that allows them to cross over to higher levels of training. This higher track ultimately leads to advanced levels of specialized training.

Figure 1. Secondary School Options in the Dutch Educational System



W O higher education
V W O pre-university education
H B O higher vocational education
institutes of technology
home economics schools
agricultural colleges
art colleges
secondary teacher training, higher level
commercial education
H A V O general secondary education, higher level

M A V O general secondary education intermediate level
M B O secondary vocational education
technical schools
trade courses
home economics schools
socio-pedagogic education
commercial education
art schools
agricultural schools
nursery teacher-training courses
L B O elementary vocational education

Moreover, upon entry into the secondary education system students in all program lines study a similar curriculum with the bridge or bruge class. In theory, all students entering this new system of differentiated options are given a year for observation, evaluation, and final analysis. This enables

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validation of placement decisions of placement committees at the end of the six years of primary education. More importantly, the Dutch have started the route of vocational education for many LOM students at the age of 12. However, while they are committed to this early start in training, they are still flexible in decision making about students.

There are unique programs and practices within the secondary education system which aid LOM students in the transitional process. In the Amsterdam school system there is an afterschool program which helps LOM students with extra instruction in subjects which they are experiencing learning difficulties. Tutorial help is also given in order that LOM students complete their homework assignments. All teaching is done by certified special education teachers, who regularly teach at the school during the day.

Afterschool programs are voluntary, and there is generally a good rate of participation. While this program has proved successful there are questions about its future because of bugetary considerations. If possible, this program will be extended beyond the greater Amsterdam schools however. The Dutch have found that LOM students are educationally at risk during the period of 14 to 16 years old. This program gives students a boost in their school work and keeps them interested in pursuing vocational education.

There is also an informal practice of LOM students returning to their former secondary school after graduation in order to seek out advice of school personnel. LOM students may ask for information about education and training, or suggestions concerning social or personal problems. While these schools technically have no responsibility for their former students, they gladly take on the informal role of counseling. This becomes an important support system for LOM students if they wish to utilize it.

Vocational education for LOM students is primarily done in two educational settings. One setting is the segregated LOM vocational program called VBO. This program focuses on developing vocational skills in students who will not pursue training after graduation from the VBO program. They are precluded from further training because of low level educational and vocational potential. Therefore vocational programs teach lower level vocational skills that are needed in the community in which they are trained. This might include practical skills like small engine repair, bicycle repair, sign painting, woodworking and simple fabrication of iron and metal. It also includes skills that are needed because of the location of a specific industry or business in the community.

As part of the program LOM students in VBO schools have practice experiences in the community. Students who are learning a specific skill often get a chance to work with an experienced worker in that skill area. The school has designated personnel to track this "practice" placement. This allows for "fine tuning" the skill level of LOM students before they finally graduate from the program.

Upon graduation there are efforts from VBO school staff to help students find jobs in the community. In some cases students may return to jobs where they did their "practice" experience. While there does not seem to be any specifically identified persons to systematically plan the transition, administrators, teachers, and support personnel try their best to get LOM students placed in jobs in the community. This effort becomes increasingly more difficult as the job market tightens up, however.

With the expected move towards integration, there is a changeover of philosophy and programming that has direct impact on LOM students who seek vocational training. A shift will occur from segregated VBO vocational classes

to programs within vocational-technical schools. A model called Individual Technical Education or ITO has been developed to accommodate for LOM students. Currently, this program has been implemented on a limited basis.

This model places special education instruction for LOM students in the vocational-technical schools. Special education teachers teach content courses that are designed for the secondary curriculum. In addition, these teachers often accompany LOM students in vocational and technical courses. Within the regular vocational setting the special education teachers team teach, provide extra group instruction within the setting itself, or give tutorial help. This has developed positive attitudes in students and teachers alike. Efforts like these that have proven to be the difference between successful completion of vocational training or failure in the system's last efforts to train LOM students for the workplace. Moreover, LOM students have begun to earn "C" certificates in vocational technical trades as a result of this ITO program. This "C" certification enables advanced vocational training in high level specialized programs. It is representative of excellence in vocational training and awarded after a written examination and successful completion of a designated project in the student's area of training.

Those LOM students who do not have "C" certificate potential may follow programs for "B" and "A" certificates. These programs are less demanding. Therefore vocational programming is individualized for LOM students who possess less training potential, yet they still receive a quality vocational education.

The Learning Disabled Adult

The learning disabled population tends to lose its identify as a handicapped group in adulthood. They are clearly viewed differently inside and outside of the educational system. To a large extent, learning

disabilities is viewed as a problem which is education-specific and not a condition which has implications for functioning through the entire developmental lifespan. Thus learning disabled adults are absorbed by societal systems with little consideration for their specific problem in adulthood. Now, within the context of the economic conditions, the Dutch government is not willing to commit more services to learning disabled persons beyond the systems and structures that may be accessed through the current transition of school to work.

There are exceptions on a small scale, however. In an indirect way, learning disabled people are able to secure employment through the 3 per cent quota set by legislation for hiring handicapped persons in business and industry. A subset of the learning disabled population, that is, persons with demonstrable central nervous system dysfunctioning or damage may be certified for eligibility in this quota pool. In 1985, legislation has mandated that the quota for this program will rise to 5 per cent.

In another indirect way, persons with learning disabilites who cannot find employment or are unemployed may receive unemployment benefits from the government. However, all persons are entitled to this benefit program and learning disabled individuals are not given extra help for training or placement in the employ of business and industry.

In a direct approach, the Dutch are beginning to think of devising a system of adult education for learning disabled adults. The model has already been validated in DASVO School in Amsterdam. Discussion has occurred at high ministry levels with others who formulate Dutch educational policy, and tentative plans have been made to implement a system of adult education for immigrants in the Netherlands and learning disabled adults. This will occur in 60 geographically distributed centers. The initial problem in implementing

this network of learning centers is the block grant system of funding. Presently, the presence of a center like the DASVO model has much to do with the priorities of local political subentities which govern the use of the monies.

While investigating the state-of-the-art of the LD adult in the Netherlands, the writer uncovered a point in philosophy that may have much to do with the apparent reticence of the Dutch government to provide services for learning disabled persons beyond the traditional school years. Currently, a thought that is abound in the Ministry of Social Affairs is the extent to which those in the fields of human services should and can intervene into the social ecologies of disabled persons (in a generic sense). A point of debate then is where intervention becomes counterproductive by setting up synthetic ecologies which are held together only by the laws, rules, and provisions made by large bureaucracies and implemented by professionals who cannot begin to match the personal concern, resources, and initative of natural social ecologies.

To this point, the investigator interviewed learning disabled adults of various ages and found a consensus that they are glad not to be in any system which provides differential considerations (good or bad) because of their label-learning disabled. They firmly believed that the label was more of a handicap than their disability and that once in society they have faired well in social, vocational, and in most cases educational environments. Their beliefs may be borne out, at least in part, by follow-up research of LOM graduates and their current standing in Dutch society. In a study done by the Gemeentelijk Pedotherapeutisch Institute in Amsterdam 224 former LOM students were investigated for social and vocational adjustment in adult life. It was found that 75 per cent had satisfactory adjustment in both criteria for success. The remaining 25 per cent need to be studied further, but the Dutch ask a similar question that researchers in the United States ask about unsuccessful life

adjustment. If this study were done with a representative sample of nonhandicapped Dutch adults would the result be different than the LOM data. This is not to deminish to needs of the learning disabled individuals who evidenced unsuccessful adjustments. It simply puts the future challenge in perspective without decrying the efforts that are generally working well within the Dutch educational system.

Discussion Regarding Findings in the Netherlands

On the face of it, the Dutch system may look to be less than progressive because of its current system of delivering services to LOM students in restrictive educational environments. Yet the structure of the system allows for considerable flexibility for secondary school training. LOM students may attend any of a number of educational options which are well articulated and sequenced.

The majority of LOM students attend vocational programs starting at age 13 or 14. This allows for needed time to develop prevocational and vocational skills. Programming in VBO or ITO programs do not incorporate vocational training as an afterthought. Little is left for chance except for ultimate job placement upon graduation.

If the Dutch underestimate the potential of LOM students there is still a concerted effort to maximize vocational training. Parents have been reported to be very happy with LOM programming on all levels, however. This attitude is coupled with the humanistic approach taken by Dutch educational personnel in making short and long term decisions and in educating LOM students. It also may be a function of the LOM category having less to do with the middle class dynamic alluded to in the American learning disabilities literature. To a significant degree, expectations of vocational preparation and adjustment are not colored by attitudes of job status.

With the onset of integration of handicapped and nonhandicapped students in education settings, LOM students will be able to access programs that have linkages to advanced levels of secondary education. A promising indication is the success of ITO-LOM students. Ongoing support for LOM students in secondary education will have a positive impact on the transition process. The rights and privileges of the Dutch social welfare system can do well in facilitating continuation of transition.

The notion that LOM problems are only problems in school and not in society creates an interesting situation for LOM adults. Because of the "softness" of the disability, there are differential rights and privileges according to the degree of medical involvement in the condition in adulthood. At this time, however, it seems the Dutch are not willing to extend added services because of budget problems and philosophical questions about meddling in social ecologies.

One primary factor rests in the extent of education and training efforts for LOM adults in the future. The system of block grant funding for education gives the opportunity for LOM adults and possibly the parents of LOM adults to participate in the political process of formulating educational priorities in local educational programming. There is a great deal of potential for citizen lobbying under this form of funding (especially with the sectarian and non-sectarian jurisdiction of education). Presently, an elaborate system of adult education geared for LOM adults is not an issue in the Netherlands. One explanation is the attitudes of LOM adults described earlier in this paper.

Part II

The School to Work Transition for Learning Disabled Students and the Learning Disabled Adult in Danish Society

Factors Affecting Investigation in Denmark

In the context of the Danish educational system, there is not a disability category which is exactly representative of learning disabilities as it is defined in the United States. The category which Danes consider closest to learning disabilities is the reading disabled population, or the dyslexic (ordblind) group. There are other categories of handicapped students which may in some way overlap with the reading disabled population. These are the students with general learning problems, who are typically associated with higher functioning mentally retarded students, and speech and language impaired students. For the purposes of the study-visit in Denmark the investigator focused on primarily the reading disabled population as the learning disabled population.

Approximately 95 per cent of the Danish population shares a common language, culture, religion, history, and heritage. Thus the learning disabled population is very homogenous in composition. Perhaps the greatest amount of diversity seen in demographic variables is the narrow range of socioeconomic status and degree of urbanization. Thus the population is not complicated by racial, ethnic, language, and poverty factors as is the case in the United States. Moreover, there is a high percentage of literacy in Denmark which has been increasing over the past decade (Danish Educational Research Institute, 1983).

The special education system in Denmark is guided by the principle of integration. The goal is integration of handicapped and nonhandicapped persons

to the greatest extent possible in all educational experiences. Since the Danish Parliament (Folketing) legislated integration in 1969, this concept has grown to become institutionalized in the educational system. This is especially true in the case of learning disabled individuals who have been integrated into regular education programs at primary, secondary, post secondary, and adult levels. Currently, Denmark is on its second generation of school-aged students who will be educated in an integrated educational system.

The educational philosophy of Denmark stems from the belief that diversity of educational options provides strength in the system, and meets the needs of all its people. The tone of this educational movement is credited to N.F.S. Grundtvig, Danish clergyman, poet, and philosopher of the mid 1800's. His fierce criticism of conventional education practices was the catalyst for the concept of Danish Folk High School. These Folk High Schools de-emphasize scholastic-specific study and focuses on educational enrichment through life long learning about the popular Danish culture. This set the foundation for the elaborate system of adult education which thrives in Denmark today.

Social/political and economic factors are having great impact on Danish life as well as the system and structure of Danish education. Currently, there are dramatic problems with unemployment (especially among adolescents and young adults). This has virtually shut off entry level jobs and has motivated students to continue their education past the compulsory years of Folkeskole education. This has put stress on post- Folkeskole education and in some cases has created overcrowdedness and waiting lists in some postsecondary schools. In addition, there are budgetary problems at the national level which has had a significant affect on services delivered by local governmental agencies.

There is also a shifting political philosophy evident in Denmark. Presently, conservative philosophy dominates the actions of the Folketing, and there are proposals for change that may significantly alter social and educational systems.

Transition from School to Work

The transition from school to work for learning disabled students is similar to regular education students in the Danish educational system. Part of the process is mandated by the Folkeskole Act of 1975 which introduced vocational studies (arbejdskendskab) as new subjects in the eighth, ninth, and tenth classes. The law emphasized that students in the Folkeskole should acquire "the knowledge of the range of educational and employment opportunities available and of the conditions prevailing in working life." Thus as part of the secondary school education, the Folkeskole students are placed in one or two week "practice experiences" in industry and commerce. Typically these are businesses which are located in or near the community of the school itself. These businesses may be plant nurseries, dairies, apothecaries, jewelry shops, shoe stores, cheese shops, etc. The thought behind the curricular change is to provide a closer link of school to society. These placements enable students to get "hands on" experience in the world of work. Moreover, in 1983 the Danish Ministry of Education reported the program consisted of 100,000 placements.

Students who were interviewed about this program describe their experience as one that emphasizes entry level skills. For the great majority, it is their first introduction to the world of work. The general conclusion of learning disabled students participating in this program was that it was highly valuable. It helped them to learn more about their strengths and limitations. Moreover, it laid an understanding of what needed to be

accomplished in subsequent years of schooling, whether in the Folkeskole or in other educational programs. Most learning disabled students expressed the opinion that they gained confidence with this experience. The concept of work became less abstract, and they felt that there was a place for them beyond the school-age years.

There are many opportunities to have "practice" experiences throughout the latter part of the Folkeskole years. There may be as many as two "practice" work experiences per year from the seventh class to the tenth class. This has much to do with school philosophy, community resources, and personnel roles.

A by-product of this program is the experience employers have with learning disabled students. They are able to look beyond that label, and this diffuses the stigma and misunderstanding of the handicap currently held in society. Beyond this sociological dynamic, learning disabled students are put in contact with potential employers. This increases chances of employment upon completion of their education. In addition, it helps to develop a network of references and contacts that may also help in securing employment at the termination of education and training experiences.

As part of this program, students nearing graduation can take field trips to vocational, technical, commercial, and higher education schools. They are able to interact with those who staff the programs and observe the programs in operation. Representatives of these programs also visit the Folkeskoles in order to orient students to their various post- Folkeskole educational options.

Another aspect of the conventional Danish education system is the optional tenth class which may be attended by regular education and learning disabled students alike. Under the 1975 legislation, (implemented in 1976), a nine year compulsory general basic plan of study was mandated with a supplementary tenth

year if desired. Thus learning disabled students needing more time to master skills and complete designated curricula are provided with this mechanism. In the tenth class as in the eighth and ninth classes, students may chose between two courses of different content. This enables learning disabled students to take basic as well as advanced subjects.

In cases where learning disabled students aspire to specific forms of further education, they may take courses in the tenth class to help them in entrance criteria or in background needed for a particular course of study. Some learning disabled students who wish to enter the world of work but cannot find employment elect to enter the tenth class until employment can be secured. As can be seen in the Figure 2 below there are a diversity of subjects to choose from. These subjects represent a spectrum of classes designed for those pursuing further academic study and vocational study as well. There is a great amount of similarity between subject offerings in the eighth, ninth, and tenth classes. This enables learning disabled youngsters to have extra time in order that they pass either the Leaving Examination or Advanced Leaving Examination from the Folkeskole.

The person in the Folkeskole system who is most instrumental in the transition process for learning disabled students is the kurator. Borrowed from the Scottish concept, the kurator in many cases plays a central role in heading up the transition process from school to school or school to work. When the kurator is involved in future planning for the learning disabled student, there is a logical, systematic, and orderly process of transition.

The kurator is an educator with specific knowledge in counseling and a practical understanding of community relations, vocational placement and liaison relationships. He/she aids in guidance of transition options through consultation with the learning disabled students, parents, and teachers. This

Figure 2. Curriculum of the Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Forms (Classes) in the Danish Folkeskole

Category number	Form number 6	Form number 7	Form number 8	Form number 9	Form number 10
1. Compulsory/must	Danish Arithmetic/Math. Phys.Ed.and Sport Christian Studies History Geography Biology Home Economics English	Danish Arithmetic/Math. Phys.Ed.and Sport Christian Studies History Geography Biology Physics/Chemistry English	Danish Arithmetic/Math. Phys.Ed.and Sport Christian Studies History Contemporary Stud. Physics/Chemistry English	Danish Arithmetic/Math. Phys.Ed.and Sport Christian Studies History Contemporary Stud. Physics/Chemistry English	Danish Phys.Ed.and Sport Contemporary Stud. English
2. Compulsory/may	Creative Art Music Needlework Woodwork	Creative Art Music Needlework Woodwork Home Economics			
3. Non-compulsory/must		German	German	German	German Arithmetic/Math. Christian Studies/ Religious Studies Physics/Chemistry French
4. Non-compulsory/may			Creative Art Music Geography Biology Needlework Woodwork Home Economics Typing Photography Drama Film Motor Knowledge Vocational Stud. Electronics Child Care	Creative Art Music Geography Biology Needlework Woodwork Home Economics Typing Photography Drama Film Motor Knowledge Vocational Stud. Electronics Child Care	Creative Art Music Geography Biology Needlework Woodwork Home Economics History Latin Typing Photography Drama Film Motor Knowledge Vocational Stud. Electronics Child Care

process is informal and is not guided by rules or regulations from Danish law. What is paramount in the process is dialogue amongst all parties involved, and ultimately the development of a plan which fits the profile of the student. The key to the effectiveness of the kurator is knowledge of post Folkeskole options and an intimate knowledge of community resources and potential employers.

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When the learning disabled student leaves the Folkeskole the work of the kurator is not finished, however. There are liaison activities beyond typical follow-up procedures. Part of the kurator's role is to work through the transitional period. Also it is not uncommon for past graduates of a particular Folkeskole to return after grduation in order to elicit the help of the kurator in solving a problem in employment, training or a personal situation. Kurators who were interviewed by the investigator saw this as an important part of their role.

The kurator has been quite successful in helping learning disabled students find jobs. For example, at the Kingoskole in Slangerup, Denmark, all learning disabled students who did not pursue postsecondary education were working. The role of kurator as well as the involvement of schools with learning disabled students has created a phenomena. At a time when the unemployment situation in Denmark is at a crises situation, learning disabled youth have a lower unemployment percentage than their regular peers. This is typical of many of the less urbanized communities in Denmark. The problem does intensify with urbanization, however.

Beyond the structure and system of the Folkeskole which aids the transition process, there are many postsecondary educational opportunities which learning disabled persons may access for further education and training. In Denmark 85 percent of students choose education beyond the Folkeskole. For those who join the labor market, there is a good chance that they will take adult education classes before they are thirty years old.

One avenue of postsecondary education that learning disabled students may access is Basic Vocational Education (known as EFG for Erhvervsfaglig Grunduddannelse). This concept was started in experimental form in 1969 through teaching iron and metal work trades. Prior to this time training in

all trades was done through the apprenticeship concept which was suffering because of low intake. In 1977 Basic Vocational Education program began full force and has become a very popular postsecondary program. Figure 3 shows the steady growth.

Figure 3. Intake to Danish Vocational Education and Training Programs

		1960	1970	1977	79/80
Vocational education and training:	EFG		200	13,000	38,834
	apprentices	33,100	28,000	20,300	18,857
	basic courses/examination courses	900	3,000	3,100	4,613
Vocational education and training in all:		34,000	31,000	36,400	62,304

Today there are eight main vocational fields: building and construction, the graphic industries, commercial and clerical work, iron and metal industries, agriculture, overland transport, the food industry and the service trades. These eight clusters enable specialization of up to 150 kinds of vocational training. They are located throughout Denmark in a way that duplication is minimized and access is possible through public transportation. These technical school programs are discussed with students leaving the Folkeskole and typically there are field trips to these facilities to discuss post- Folkeskole training opportunities.

At the Hillerod Technical School which was visited by the investigator there were 29 trades taught to a total of 900 pupils per day. It is estimated that 10 to 12 percent of the students in attendance had some kind of a learning disability. Moreover, it was thought that this was the approximate percentage of learning disabled persons attending most technical school programs in Denmark.

Generally, the only admission criteria is completion of the Folkeskole. Since there is a large demand for technical school training, a lottery system has been employed. Despite the lottery system, learning disabled persons have been able to attend these programs in representative numbers. In some cases, they have been accepted faster and in greater numbers than the lottery system allows. In essence, some admissions committees of technical schools have demonstrated their commitment to integration of handicapped individuals by facilitating admission procedures.

The vocational school program involves one year of theoretical study and two to three years of study of part time study while working in their field of training. For learning disabled students who have difficulty mastering the courses in the theoretical year, there are opportunities to double up on course work, receive extra lessons from instructors or work out cooperative arrangements with programs such as Evening Schools and Ordblindinstituts (Dyslexia Institute) for supplemental instruction.

Vocational schools in Denmark are not allowed to use more than five percent of their budget for students with special learning problems. If needed, they may petition the Ministry of Education for use of monies beyond that figure, however.

There is also the possibility of learning a vocational skill through the apprenticeship system. This system involves an apprenticeship contract from

two to four years depending on trade during which students serve as apprentices and go to technical schools for theoretical training for a prescribed number of weeks each year. Whereas apprenticeship training for learning disabled persons has the support of national trade unions in Denmark, there have been problems in securing apprenticeships at the local level. Economic conditions in Denmark have made it difficult for all persons to find apprenticeship training situations. The Danish government has provided tax incentives for firms to contract with apprentices but this program has had only partial success. In addition, there is a popular notion that the training route for learning disabled persons should dictate vocational school training first. In some cases, learning disabled siblings do get apprenticeships in situations where family members or friends are able to make that arrangement.

Learning disabled students also attend other formal postsecondary programs. These are programs which provide education and training in commercial, agricultural, and higher education fields. Their presence has put pressure on existing systems (despite relatively low numbers of learning disabled students in these programs) for extra support personnel and accommodation for learning problems. Moreover, it has prompted debate in the gymnasium, a long revered and established program for Denmark's brightest students, as to the appropriateness of altering programs, curricula, and grading to accommodate for learning difficulties indicative of learning disabled students.

There are other programs that are part of the Danish educational system that can meet the needs of learning disabled students. One program is the Youth School. This may be attended by students who are 14 to 18 years old. After the seventh class, students can switch to the program to study a wide range of subjects and participate in recreational programs. Specifically,

basic vocational courses are taught in the Youth School for young semi-skilled workers. Some specialized courses allow attendance until age 25. Other courses are designed to provide special education for young people with reading difficulties and other mild handicaps. The Youth School movement through its program design has had a significant impact. It has improved the possibilities of maintaining employment in "high risk" competitive employment populations and has combated youth unemployment.

Another program which has aided learning disabled adolescents and young adults is the Continuation Schools (Efterskole). These are residential schools for students who range from 14 to 18 years old. Originally these schools were founded for students too young to enter the Folk High Schools. Today these schools serve a diversity of educational interests. Approximately five Continuation Schools throughout Denmark serve learning disabled populations. In the greater Copenhagen area Holte-Hus (House) has a residential program that enables learning disabled students to attend for two years. During this time they are given remedial courses on the Folkeskole level which enables them to continue onward to other postsecondary training opportunities. The residential program is designed to promote growth in social/emotional, and personal development which will ultimately aid vocational and community adjustment. Most of the Efterskole students enter vocational or technical programs while some pursue further education in commercial fields. A kurator helps the transitional process for these students upon graduation of the program.

Educational opportunities also exist for learning disabled persons on a lifelong basis. One program they may attend is the Evening School (aftenskole). These schools offer courses which are appealing to the interests of adults. Responsibility for Evening School programs vary. They

are sponsored by municipalities and by political parties in Denmark. The Social Democratic Party runs its program through their Workers Educational Association (Arbejdernes Oplyningsforbund) and the Conservative Party gives courses through its educational arm, the Popular Educational Association (Folkeligt Oplyningsforbund). Annual attendance of these programs and programs similar to these amounts to approximately 700,000 participants.

Learning disabled persons have specific opportunities within this program as a result of the Act on Special Education for Adults. This established compensatory special education for persons with physical and mental handicaps. This enables as few as two learning disabled persons (free of charge) to band together and request courses that would benefit them in their vocational or community adjustment.

It is not uncommon for several learning disabled adults to band together and request further reading or math instruction. There may be a request to study the practical aspects of the social welfare system or politics, etc. Moreover, these courses may be used to support learning disabled persons on the job. For example, several carpenters with learning disabilities can request a course focusing on updating themselves with new methods or "brush up" on their math that is desperately needed to construct quality homes. Office workers with learning disabilities may formulate a course to help development of communication skills and further develop social skills. Not only does this increase skills but it builds support groups. Learning disabled persons have come out of these programs with friendships and social contacts that are an edge against loneliness. This problem has been described by several American writers in analyzing social problems of learning disabled persons in the United States.

The Learning Disabled Adult

The learning disabled adult in Denmark is able to become as fully integrated into society that he/she wishes. The philosophy of normalization of handicapped persons which was born in Scandinavia is alive via an elaborate system of educational and social welfare programs. These systems enable learning disabled adults to participate fully in Danish society. The Danes are willing to provide quality services for its citizens from womb to tomb. This includes learning disabled persons.

There are very few legislative acts which specifically mandate services to learning disabled persons. Yet this has not hindered learning disabled adults in their efforts to access services within the system. Learning disabled adults participate in education and training classes and are entitled to utilize the services of vocational rehabilitation. There are cases in which learning disabled persons have been excused from the military obligation because of the severity of their handicap. Also certain admissions and testing criteria have been waived for qualified learning disabled persons when entering higher education programs. These cases are usually validated through evaluation procedures of the Ordblindinstituts on request of the Ministry of Education.

What becomes abundantly clear is that learning disabled adults have great latitude in seeking out systems and programs to further develop their skills. In the absence of specific legislation, litigation, advocacy movements, the system is willing and able to accommodate for their needs. The education and social systems that have an underpinning of normalization in their thoughts and actions, provide life long opportunities to learning disabled persons. In an interview the investigator caught an indication of the advanced state-of-the art in Denmark. One specialist stated "We have provided integration

successfully in education, and we are doing well with integration in society. Our next task is to develop leisure-time integration. This is our next challenge.

Discussion Regarding Findings in Denmark

The transition of school to work and adulthood for learning disabled persons in Denmark is made easier because of the excellent quality of life provisions present in Danish society. There are a wide variety of educational options during compulsory education years, in higher education and adult education systems. This is coupled with an outstanding system of social services which are reputed to be among the best in the world.

Within the educational system itself there are programs, curricula, and personnel which systematically develop vocational awareness and attitudes for all students. In addition, there is support given to LD students during the transition. This extends beyond compulsory education, however. The elaborate system of adult education ensures life long learning opportunitites to support employment or self improvement. This serves as a vehicle for transitions in adulthood beyond the standard transition years of current concern.

There also seems to be a willingness to do whatever has to be done to allow maximum development of LD persons. Vocational rehabilitation systems are operational for LD adults. Moreover, the spirit of innovation and flexibility ingrained in the Danish educational philosophy allows for creative experiments stemming from individual or local needs. This helps to individualize programs and approaches for LD individuals.

At this time, LD adults in Denmark are able to access any of the systems set up for nonhandicapped adults. This has been successful largely in part because of the intensive efforts for integration and normalization which has earmarked Danish society over the last 15 years. Only in the case of the Act

on Special Education for adults has there been a specific move to separate out handicapped persons for special consideration. Despite the reticence of Danish policy makers to do this (violating the spirit of integration) it was a step forward to further facilitate the life long learning experiences of learning disabled and other handicapped populations.

Implications for Practice in the United States

There is a definite contrast between the Dutch and Danish treatment of learning disabled individuals during the transition years and in adulthood. The contrast in systems provides a valuable centerpiece for analyzing which direction service delivery for learning disabled adolescents and adults should proceed in the United States. The Dutch tend to focus on transition via the traditional options within the later school years. They generally approach transition through select educational programming in vocational and postsecondary training. There is flexibility in the system as there are linkages to more advanced levels and strands of training. However, there is little involvement of vocational rehabilitation with learning disabled individuals and such services are reserved for medically validated learning disability based problems. This provides access to only a small subset of the learning disabled population. However, these individuals are the most severe and are most in need of services. Otherwise, learning disabled individuals are not recognized per se beyond the typical school years.

On the other hand, the Danes have fully implemented a comprehensive system of educational opportunities during the transition years and throughout the adult years. They have successfully addressed the concept of lifelong learning for learning disabled individuals. There is systematic structure and organization to the pursuit of vocational and postsecondary education. Moreover, adult education fully addresses the general learning needs of

learning disabled individuals, and they also have specific courses geared to vocational, social, and community adjustment. This is exclusive of the services of vocational rehabilitation services which learning disabled persons may access without much to do over definitional problems or strict eligibility criteria.

As a result of the comprehensive system of education and habilitation efforts for learning disabled individuals in Denmark, there is an ongoing maintenance of disability needs throughout the lifespan. This goes beyond the traditional concept of transition and addresses lifelong needs. In essence, current practice in Denmark acknowledges transition points which occur throughout the lifespan and not just after completion of high school years. The Netherlands is beginning to move in this direction with their plans for adult education. Admittedly, they have far to go to duplicate the advanced Danish system, and ultimately they will not be as comprehensive in service delivery to learning disabled persons as the Danes are.

When comparing the Dutch and Danish systems for the importation of knowledge and practices to the United States, there is a contrast that provides useful information for planning future services to learning disabled persons. Presently, the United States is developing services which are closer to the Dutch system than the Danish system. If they continue on this path the United States may look back in future years and retrospectively see a missed opportunity. The system of integration in Denmark is quite similar to the least restrictive environment movement in the United States. Thus it would seem that the United States could extend its systems into adulthood like the Danish model because of similar social philosophy about handicapped persons.

The kurator concept and the elaborate vocational and adult education systems, for example, can be easily incorporated into United States practice.

What becomes apparent is the United States will have to determine the extent to which learning disabled persons will be served in transition and throughout adulthood. The momentum of the Rehabilitation Services Administration eligibility rules about learning disability, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (1980) validation of the concept of specific learning disabilities by the American Psychiatric Association and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 have laid the groundwork for the development of training and habilitation of learning disabled adults. Quality services can come about through a coordinated effort of professionals, advocacy groups and learning disabled adults to adopt and adapt established practices from our European friends. The United States is capable of incorporating the best elements of the Dutch and Danish systems outlined in this paper. A delay or failure to do so would no doubt compromise the potentials of many learning disabled persons who are coming of age in greater numbers.

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